

VAI'S MUSICAL CLIMAX FROM THE MOVIE "CROSSROADS"

CROSSROADS

S U I T E

"Butler's Bag" – Soloing Off Chords
 "Headcuttin' Duel" – A trading licks duel
 between Vai and Cooder
 "Eugene's Trick Bag" – Steve's Arpeggio Treat

Although the musical climax to "Crossroads" was omitted from the soundtrack album, it still became a favorite of students and probably the most frequently requested work to be transcribed. So, here it is in its entirety, except for the segment where Jack Butler (played by Steve Vai) tries in vain to recreate the classical licks from "Eugene's Trick Bag".

The first section, "Butler's Bag", is a 12 bar blues in E that exemplifies Vai's approach to soloing off chords.

LESSON

The first four measures at letter A consist of diads derived from the E7 chord (E G# B D) commencing with a bend to B and D (Fig. 1). This idea also occurs in the B section, at the same point in the progression, and is followed by C# and G from the A7 chord (A C# E G#) (Fig. 2). The brief cadenza of the last 3 measures features an E11 arpeggio (E G# B D F# A) in combination with the E "blues scale" (E G A Bb B D) (Fig. 3).

Steve's deftness with the vibrato bar is evident through-

figure 1 fast shuffle

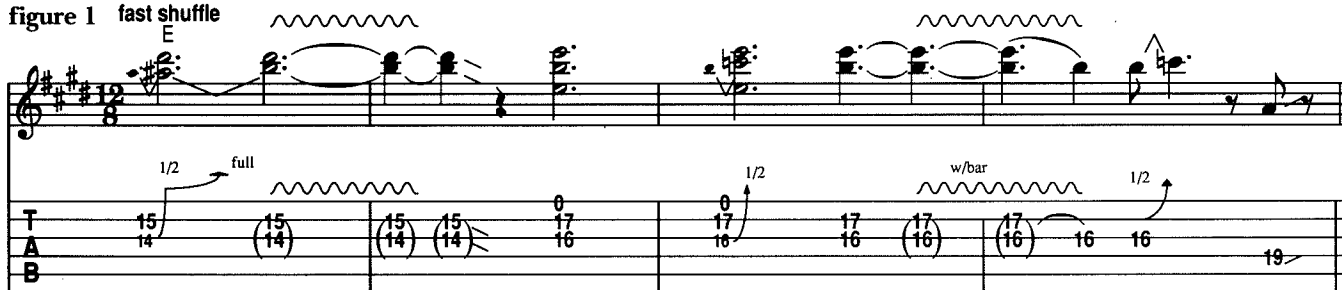


figure 2

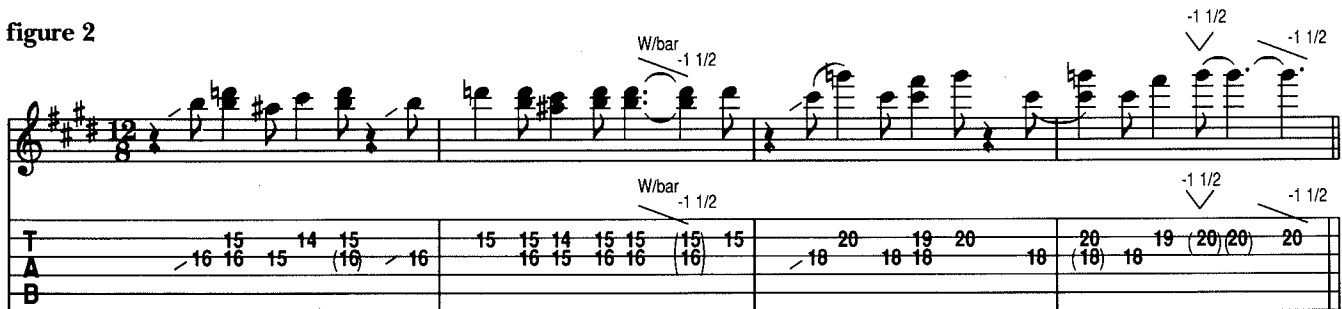


figure 3



out, especially in measure 16 where he does a “pseudobend” by pulling up on the bar, raising D a whole tone to E, and in measure 23 as he imitates a slide guitar by lowering the pitch of a note preceding a slur (Fig. 4).

Note that we’ve included suggested fingerings for tricky passages with several changes in hand position by virtue of his penchant for phrasing with legato slides.

figure 4

figure 5

Note: Tune 6th String To D
Guitar 1 - 1 1/2

figure 6

NOTE: Tuned to open D
(D A D F# A D)

*5 sounded by slide

figure 7

N.C.
a tempo

figure 8

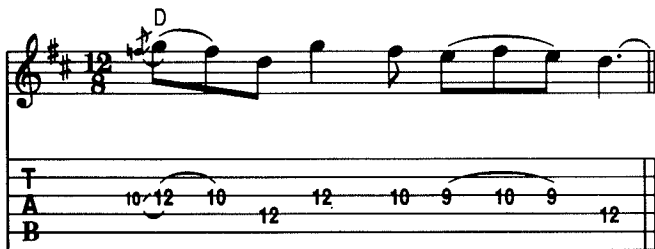
full bend being held from previous measure

In “**Headcuttin’ Duel**” our cinematic hero, Eugene Martone (played by Ralph Macchio), engages in a shootout with the Devil’s guitar-slinger, Jack Butler. Ry Cooder did all Eugene’s slide guitar parts in open D (D A D F# D A), while Steve tuned his sixth string down to D.

There’s more whammy bar antics from Vai in the first round, this time in conjunction with natural harmonics (Fig. 5). Cooder replies with his own rendition of the opener, using a bottleneck for slide, and the interplay continues up till letter D (Fig. 6). At that point all hell breaks loose as Jack switches guitars (this time in normal tuning) and does a furious sixteenth note run based on the D dorian mode (D E F G A B C) (Fig. 7). A 12 bar blues follows at the letter E, that features some subtle semitone bends from the sixth to the seventh degree in measures 2-4 and 12 (Fig. 8). In measure 7 he imitates a slide guitar again as in “Butler’s Bag” (Fig. 9).

STEVE VAI • "CROSSROADS" SUITE

figure 9



Eugene is then joined by Willie Brown (played by Joe Seneca) on the harmonica for a duet. Since the harmony is in parallel thirds both parts can be played easily in the open D tuning as demonstrated in fig. 10. Jack

figure 10



throws in a third part during the next chorus and then goes back into solo flight. In the last two measures of this lead break Vai goes "outside" and combines the C major pentatonic (C D E G A) with the D blues pentatonic (D F G A) (Fig. 11). At the letter H, Eugene

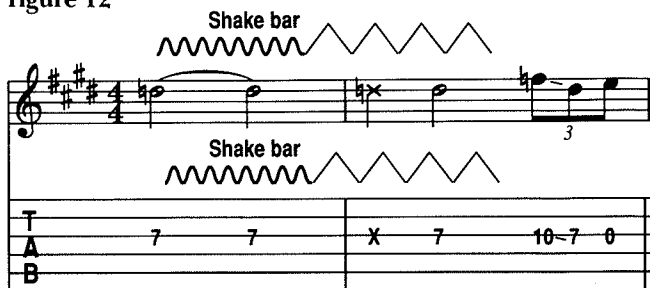
figure 11



responds, concluding with some Mississippi Delta style blues licks containing double stops.

The piece modulates to E at letter I and the battle continues, this time the clincher is wide interval bending (see measures 8-9), plus extended fingerings in measures 1 and 8 of the E "blues scale" PP. Eugene makes another admirable attempt to bring the champion to his knees, but Jack pulls out all the stops commencing with a digital delay generated "round" (also called a circle or perpetual canon) in G that consists of descending the G dorian (G A Bb C D E F) and then ascending the G lydian mode (G A B C# D E F#) right up to the cadenza in E at letter L. For the first 8 measures of the cadenza he burns up the "blues scale", then goes to the E mixolydian or "seventh scale" (E F# G# A B C# D). The vibrato bar receives an especially "Vai"-lent treatment in measures 14-15 and we wouldn't recommend imitating Jack Butler (i.e. shaking the guitar by the bar) at this point in the duel, unless you're prepared to deal with the possible consequential damage to said unit (Fig. 12).

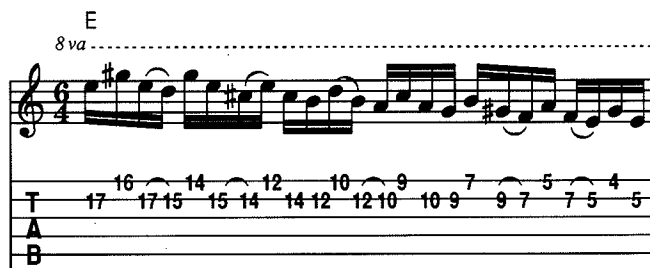
figure 12



Things look pretty grim for Eugene and Willie, but "Lightning Boy" gets his mojo workin' and treats us to "Eugene's Trick Bag". After getting everyone's attention with an uninterrupted slur he falls back on his classical training and goes into a series of arpeggios: Am - E7 - A7 - Dm - G#dim7 - Am. This and the next section are Steve Vai's rendition of a composition by classical guitarist William Kanengiser that Eugene played (actually William played and arranged all the classical guitar parts) earlier in the movie.

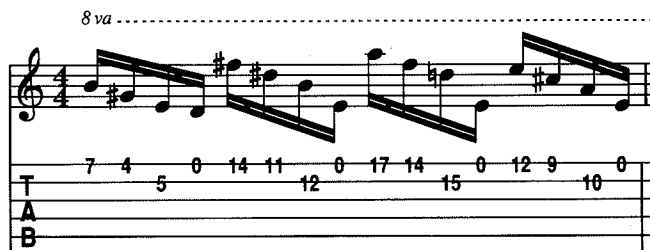
Following a sequence of sliding thirds derived from the E mixolydian (Fig. 13) our hero then plays a series

figure 13



of major arpeggios with a repeated tonic pedal point via the open first string starting at letter E. The best method for smoothly connecting the enormous leaps required here is to shift your eyes to the next position while completing the preceding group of sixteenth notes. The final arpeggiated sequence is based on a G# diminished seventh chord (G# B D F) (Fig. 14). An

figure 14



unusual feature of this chord is that it is symmetrical as its structure is composed of minor thirds stacked upon each other. The final run of this piece is a rapid ascension of the A harmonic minor scale (A B C D E F G#), the only common scale containing this chord when harmonized and is found on seventh degree or leading tone. The final high A note is the result of actually "fretting" the first string against the neck pickup.

BUTLER'S BAG

Music by
STEVE VAI

(Devil) "Jack Butler's gonna like you"
(girl) ooh

1 **A** *slowly* *f* P.M. *1/2* *1/2* *full*

5 *1/2* *w/bar* *1/2* *full*

9 *E* *B* *fingering: 1 1 2 3 3 2 1* *full* *let ring*

12 *A* *E* *A.H.* *simile A.H.* *A.H.* *8 va* *let ring*

15 **B** *-1 1/2* *w/bar* *-1 1/2* **full w/bar* **octave above fretted note* **Full w/bar*

18 *-1 1/2* *A* *-1 1/2* *w/bar* *-1 1/2* **pull up on bar* *-1 1/2* *w/bar* *-1 1/2*

STEVE VAI • BUTLER'S BAG

The musical score for 'Butler's Bag' by Steve Vai is presented in three systems. Each system includes a standard musical staff in E major (three sharps) and a corresponding guitar tablature. The first system shows a melodic line with various bends (marked -1, -1 1/2, -1/2) and a fret sequence of 17, 15, 18, 14, 12, 14, 12, 14, 12, 10, 10, 12, 14, (14), 14, (14), 12, (12), 14, (14), 12, 14. The second system continues the melody with bends and a fret sequence of 14, 12, 14, 14, 12, 14, 14, 12, (12), 12, 0, 10, 0, 0, 9, 0, 0, 0, 7, 10, 11, 12, (12), (12). The third system concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase and a fret sequence of 19, 16, 17, 15, 14, 16, 13, 12, 14, 12, 11, 14, 11, 7, 9, 14, 13, 15, 14, 17, 22, (22), 22, (22), (22), 0.

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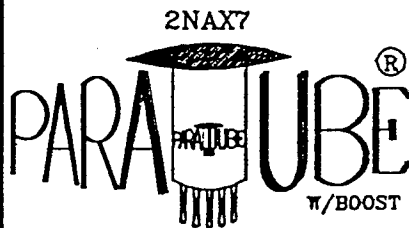
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Music by
STEVE VAI and RY COODER

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STEVE VAI and RY COODER

Editor's Note: Standard Notation Readers should read Tablature line for Letter B since most of it is in Open D tuning.

NOTE: Tuned to open $\{D\ A\ D\ F\# \ A\ D\}$

* place fretting finger lightly between 6th and 7th fret

STEVE VAI • Headcuttin' Duel

28

• muted harm.

G5 fretted

33

freely Guitar 1 full

Guitar 2

string noise

rake

37

Guitar 1 full

Guitar 2

let ring

Guitar 1 full

39

Guitar 2

Guitar 1

Guitar 2

Guitar 1

44

Guitar 2

Guitar 1

47

Guitar 2

w/ slide

49 8va swing feel

ritard

3 (applause)

3

54 **D** N.C. a tempo

Guitar 1

57 **E** D (hold bend)

ritard A.H. - 21/2 full (hold bend)

1/2

61 1/2 (hold bend)

64 full D -1 -1/2

67 A dive

70 8va D

full 1/2 hold bend

STEVE VAI • Headcuttin' Duel

74

volume swells

Guitar 2

79 **F** D

Guitar 2 w/slide throughout

NOTE: harmonica harmony part a third above Guitar 2

83 **G**

Guitar 2

D

87 **G**

Guitar 2

D

91 **D** **G**

Guitar 1

8 va

full

Guitar 2 (harmonica harmony simile) slightly flat

8 va -----

97 D dive A D - 1 1/2

19 19 (19) (0) 17 10 (10) 20 20 20 10 17 19 (19) (19) 17 17 22 (22) 20 (20) 20

string noise

(12) (12) 12 12 12 (12) 14 12 12 12 12 (12) 12 12 (12) 12

G

103 D w/bar full dive 1 1/2 hold bend

13 12 (13) (13) (13) (13) 15 (15) (15) 15 15 15 (15) (15) (15) 13

108 G D 8 va A

full full full

(13) (13) 0 0 13 (15) (15) 13 15 (15) 13 15 15 (15) 20 (20) 19 20 20 13 13 12 13

112 8 va P.M. D

(12) 12 10 12 10 10 0 0 5 0 5 0 5 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 3 5 3 0

H 8 va

115 D Guitar 2 (w/slide throughout) (Open D tuning)

19 19 21 22 (22) 22/24 (24) 24 (24) 24 (24) 24

8 va

119 G D

24 20 24 24 (24) 17 17 16 17 10 17 10 17 (17) 12 (12) 11 10 10 12 12 (12) 12

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123 **A**

12 11 12 12 11 12 11 12 12 13 12 12 12 12 13 12 11 12 12 12 12

127 **I**

Guitar 1
Guitar tuned normal (6th string to E)

17 15 12 15 17 15 12 15 12 15 14 12 14 12 14 12 15 15 (15) (15) 10 15 (15) 15 (15) 15 15

130

full w/bar - 1 1/2 (harmonies) (harmonies)

* release bend while sliding

132 **J**

Guitar 2 (w/slide throughout)
(Open D tuning)

135

138

2-3

142 **K**

18 17 15 18 | 17 15 17 15 | 14 17 15 17 | 15

14 (14) 14 17 15 14 17 15 17 15

Guitar 2 echo w/long delay and single repeat
Guitar 1 (repeats notated if pseudo-echo effect desired with additional guitar)
echo harmony

146

14 12 14 12 | 14 12 14 15 | 12 14 15 17 | 10 19

14 12 14 12 14 | 12 14 15 12 | 14 15 17 10

150 **L** 8 va **cadenza freely**

full (17) full (17) full (17) full 1/2 full (17) 15 17 15 17 15 19 15 15

154 8 va

17 15 17 15 15 19 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 19 15 15 17 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15

156 8 va

12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 14 12 14 12 14 (14) 14 12 14 (14) 12 14 12 14 14 (14) (14) 12 14 12

A.H. pitch: E full A.H. pitch: E full

158

161

164

168

NOTE: sound 3 and 4 while bar is depressed

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STEVE VAI • Eugene's Trick Bag

C 8va.....

Am E7 Am Am E7 Am

a tempo *f*

8va.....

A Dm G- C

8va.....

F G#dim7 Adim E

D 8va.....

8va.....

8va.....

8va.....

8va.....

8va..... loco

A5 E5

8va..... loco

E

rit.

* high A played by fretting 1 against neck pickup